

CHRA-E INFORMATION EXPRESS



Issue 2

October 2004

Welcome to this latest issue of the CHRA-E Information Express. The intent of this publication is to disseminate information of interest to managers, supervisors, and civilian employees serviced by the CHRA – Europe Region.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Lisa J. Lessard

Autumn is my favorite time of year. It is a time of transition, *change*, beauty, and new beginnings. In the Civilian Human Resource community, we are always in a state of change; leaning forward to enhance our products and services. In our role as management advisors, we provide support to our customers dealing with the often stormy seas of change. Our attitudes shape how we view and manage change and how we influence others.

Change is everywhere. While we are supporting multiple organizational changes, we prepare to respond to plans that promise to reduce the forward-stationed military force in Europe. Internal to the CHRA-E, we are in the process of centralizing the Germany Local National staffing program. This initiative has required extensive planning, commitment and hard work. It has been met with some resistance - as change often is. In the end, we know it will improve our ability to leverage technology and improve customer service.

The civilian human resource management system is undergoing historical changes. Last November, congress passed Public Law 108-136, which provides the framework for Department of Defense to develop a system that will help the department meet the national security demands of the 21st century. In partnership with the USAREUR Civilian Personnel Directorate, CHRA-E is participating in town hall meetings to promote awareness on the development of the NSPS and an opportunity to ask questions. As the details of the new system are being worked, we all have an opportunity to participate in the process. The "contact us" link on the NSPS website, at <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/>, welcomes input from Federal employees as well as the general public.

Change can be uncomfortable and confusing. Keeping informed allows us to better understand and accept change. The HR community and management share an important role in educating employees. Employees have a responsibility to stay informed. Together, we can do this!

Wishing you a happy and safe autumn full of exciting *change* and opportunity!

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future. – John F. Kennedy

Army Civilian Corps Creed

I am an Army Civilian – a member of the Army Team.

I am dedicated to the Army, its Soldiers and Civilians.

I will always support the mission.

I provide stability and continuity during war and peace.

I support and defend the Constitution of the United States and consider it an honor to serve the Nation and its Army.

I live the Army values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage.

I am an Army Civilian.

►► NEWS FLASH ◀◀

NAF EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PROGRAM CHANGES

There are several new NAF Employee Benefit Program changes and initiatives, to include a Health Benefit Plan Selection Period from October 18th to November 12th, 2004. For more information visit the CHRA website at <http://www.chrma.hqusareur.army.mil/naf/docs/OpenSeason2004Brochure.pdf>. Questions should be directed to your local CPAC NAF Human Resources Office.

CORRECTION TO LAST NEWSLETTER

The title of the article on Page 4 should have been National Security Personnel System, not National Personnel Security System. We regret any confusion this may have caused.

ARMY EXIT SURVEY

Did you know that Army has an online exit survey to study the reasons why people leave Army civilian service voluntarily? The collective responses of departing employees are used to examine employee turnover and identify ways to become a more desirable employer.

An individual's reasons for leaving Army are very important to the study, as it seeks to improve the overall work environment for current and new employees. Therefore, please take the time to complete the online survey before you actually leave your Army civilian position. The survey takes about five minutes to complete and may be found on the CHRMA website (<http://www.chrma.hqusareur.army.mil>) under Living and Working Overseas, Preparing to Leave Your Overseas Job.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

A quick reminder for managers and supervisors regarding performance appraisals:

31 Oct 04 Senior System Rating Cycle Ends
(GS/WS 9 through 12)

US AWARDS PROCESSING CHANGES

The CPOC has implemented a program called AUTONOA, which processes awards and quality step increases (QSIs) for US employees without human intervention. Since the program extracts needed information from the RPA, the Gatekeeper Checklist is no longer required. The awards and QSIs will only process if the performance appraisal information is entered in DCPDS. To facilitate this process and ensure appraisals are timely received and processed by the CPOC, beginning 1 November 2004 managers will submit appraisals directly to the CPOC. Managers will be responsible for ensuring that appraisals are accurately completed. To assist managers, a checklist has been developed and is posted on the CHRA homepage, Management Tools, Employee Performance, TAPES Checklist - AUTONOA for US Awards and QSIs.

NAF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS ONLINE

NAF employees can now access their Benefits Record online. Visit the following website <http://www.army.mil/cfsc/documents/benefits/ebol.doc> for more information. Questions should be directed to your local CPAC NAF Human Resources Office.

POST ALLOWANCE (COLA) OVERSEAS AREAS

The Post Allowance is a cost of living allowance granted to employees officially stationed at a post in a foreign area where the cost of living, exclusive of cost of quarters, is substantially higher than in Washington, D.C. Full-time employees receive post allowance if working at a location for which a post allowance is authorized. Part-time and intermittent employees do not receive post allowance. The amount paid is a flat rate based on the employee's basic salary, size of family, and post assignment, regardless of individual expenses. The designation of eligibility of post to receive the allowance and the flat rates to be used are determined by the Department of State.

What changes have to be reported?

Employees have to submit an SF-1190 to their servicing CPAC and report the following changes:

- Change in eligible family members (Example: child turns 21, birth of child).
 - Child leaves post in excess of 30 days. (Example: student travel)
 - Child returns to the post for a period in excess of 14 days.
 - Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance is terminated and Post Allowance is initiated
 - Leave orders issued that authorize payment of travel per diem allowance. (Example: RAT travel)
 - Leave orders that do not authorize payment of travel per diem allowance, if it exceeds 30 days absence from the post.
 - The date the employee or family member occupies temporary quarters prior to departure and for which the Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance is payable.
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FEHB OPEN SEASON

Mark your calendars now. The 2004 Federal Employees Health Benefits Open Season will run from November 8, 2004 through December 13, 2004.

More information will be available online as the open season nears.

PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICES

Prohibited Personnel Practices as defined in §2302(B) of Title 5 of the United States Code.

The law provides that a federal employee authorized to take, direct others to take, recommend or approve any personnel action may not:

- (1) discriminate against an employee or applicant based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicapping condition, marital status, or political affiliation;
- (2) solicit or consider employment recommendations based on factors other than personal knowledge or records of job-related abilities or characteristics;
- (3) coerce the political activity of any person;
- (4) deceive or willfully obstruct anyone from competing for employment;
- (5) influence anyone to withdraw from competition for any position so as to improve or injure the employment prospects of any other person;
- (6) give an unauthorized preference or advantage to anyone so as to improve or injure the employment prospects of any particular employee or applicant;
- (7) engage in nepotism (i.e., hire, promote, or advocate the hiring or promotion of relatives);
- (8) engage in reprisal for whistleblowing - i.e., take, fail to take, or threaten to take or fail to take a personnel action because of any disclosure of information by the employee or applicant that the employee reasonably believes evidences a violation of a law, rule or regulation.

Examples include gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety (if such disclosure is not barred by law and such information is not specifically required by Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs - if so restricted by law or Executive Order, the disclosure is only protected if made to the Special Counsel, the Inspector General, or comparable agency official);

(9) take, fail to take, or threaten to take or fail to take a personnel action against an employee or applicant for exercising an appeal, complaint, or grievance right; testifying for or assisting another in exercising such a right; cooperating with or disclosing information to the Special Counsel or to an Inspector General; or refusing to obey an order that would require the individual to violate a law;

(10) discriminate based on personal conduct which is not adverse to the on-the-job performance of an employee, applicant, or others;

(11) take or fail to take, recommend, or approve a personnel action if taking or failing to take such an action would violate a veterans' preference requirement; and

(12) take or fail to take a personnel action, if taking or failing to take action would violate any law, rule or regulation implementing or directly concerning merit system principles at 5 U.S.C. § 2301.

Avoiding prohibited personnel practices provides a firm basis upon which to base a justification, should that become necessary.

Individuals should remain conscious of merit system principles, prohibited personnel practices, and the problems that may arise by not keeping the legal requirements in mind.

"True success in life is not measured by how much you make, but by how much of a difference you make."

(from 1001 Motivational Quotes for Success)

Centralization of Germany Local National Recruitment Program

The Civilian Personnel Operation Center (CPOC), Seckenheim will assume responsibility for the Local National (LN) Recruitment Program for Germany.

Effective 15 August 2004 Stuttgart became the first CPAC to transition LN Recruitment to the CPOC. The other CPACs in Germany will follow by the end of the calendar year.

What changed effective 15 August 2004 for LN recruitment for positions serviced by the Stuttgart CPAC?

- CPOC issues announcements with new contact and POC information
- CPOC accepts and evaluates LN applications
- CPOC issues Referral Lists and forwards to appropriate CPAC for distribution to the organizations

These same changes will occur at the other CPACs in Germany as the LN Recruitment is transitioned to the CPOC.

What will not change?

- CPAC Stuttgart allows current internal employees to drop off their application and forwards to CPOC
- CPAC forwards Referral Lists to the organizations and Works Councils and Severely Handicapped Employees' Representatives
- CPAC makes job offers and inprocesses new employees
- CPAC continues in advisory role for organizations and employees

These same functions at the CPAC will remain at the other CPACs in Germany as the LN Recruitment is transitioned to the CPOC.

"The three P's of success: Passion, Persistence, and Patience." – Doug Bronson

(from 1001 Motivational Quotes for Success)

A LOOK AHEAD

In the future employees will be able to download their own Notification of Personnel Actions (SF50s. HQDA, ASA (M&RA) Civilian Personnel Policy is developing the CPOL Army Portal for all Army civilians. Army civilians will be able to access the CPOL Army Portal through AKO (Army Knowledge Online). The CPOL Army Portal will have an option for employees to view certain data elements and download current as well as historical SF50s. The CPOL Army Portal is tentatively scheduled for deployment in late spring or early summer of 2005. Further information will be provided as it become available.

ABC-C BRIEFINGS WELL RECEIVED

Representatives from the Army Benefits Center – Civilian (ABC-C) conducted employees briefings throughout the CHRA-Europe region. During their visit (13-24 September 2004), they traveled to all eight of our CPAC's serviced activity footprints and conducted 17 briefings; reaching over 5% of our workforce. Feedback from the sessions indicated that the briefings were well-received and that the ABC-C Representatives did an excellent job presenting the material. If you were unable to attend, copies of their briefing charts are available on the CHRA website at http://www.chrma.hqusareur.army.mil/benefits/abc_c-briefings.htm. For more information about benefits and the ABC-C, visit their website at: <https://www.abc.army.mil/>.

EMPLOYMENT CORNER

(This section is designed to familiarize readers with employment terms, tools, and processes.)

Army Job Application Kit

(<http://www.cpol.army.mil/library/employment/jobkit/index.html>)

To gain civilian employment with the U.S. Army, you must have a resume in the central database. The Army Job Application Kit will help you prepare your resume. Review the descriptions of each employment category carefully as you may be eligible for more than one employment category.

RESUMIX PROCEDURES NOW USED TO APPLY FOR DEU ANNOUNCEMENTS

Army deployed a new staffing tool on 30 August 2004 known as Resumix Delegated Examining Tool. The new tool works with RESUMIX to provide a number of benefits to both managers and applicants. Applicants can submit one resume to apply for both internal and external announcements. External applicants (people without alternate employment eligibility such as VRA, In-Service Army, VEOA, etc) will follow the same Resumix application procedures to self-nominate for vacancy announcements. All vacancy announcements will be posted on CPOL and USAJOBS. Visit the CHRA at <http://www.chrma.hqusareur.army.mil/staffing/deu> for more information.

FEATURE SECTION

This section is designed to provide information about the different components of CHRA-E.

Featured this issue is the **Europe Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC).**

Located in Seckenheim, Germany, the Europe Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC) is one of eight CPOCs in the Army providing the full range of personnel operations services. The Europe CPOC services a wide spectrum of Army and DOD customers consisting of approximately 26,000 employees located in 25 different countries. Delivery of personnel operations services includes: classification, recruitment, processing and overseas entitlement and benefits. The CPOC provides services through 3 Divisions and 6 Customer Focus Teams (CFT) designed to provide a cohesive service to customers.

The CPOC team consists of trained and dedicated employees committed to seamless service delivery to our customers. Despite the many challenges and changes, continuous refinement and improvement in services is the goal of all employees. Improvements cannot be realized without the support and partnerships of the Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers (CPACs) and Commanders and Managers.

Last FY was a monumental year for the CPOC. At the beginning of the FY, the realignment to CHRA occurred, bringing the Europe CPOC and the other overseas CPOCs - Pacific and Korea, under the Civilian Human Resources Agency (CHRA) umbrella with the stateside CPOCs. At the same time, the CPOC realigned approximately 12,000 employees to the Installation Management Agency (IMA).

Through partnering and communication – improvements continue. The latest production reports boast an average of 2.1 days for routine classification and 8 days for non-routine classification. In the recruitment arena, the average time to issue a referral list is 21 days.

The most significant improvement has been in the reduction of aging actions. All partners - the managers, CPACs and CPOC - have played an important role in achieving these results. The CPACs provide the strategic recruitment advice up front. The CPOC classifies, advertises and produces the referral list. And the manager makes the selection. At the beginning of last FY, the Europe Region had 34% over 60 days. The latest report shows a decrease to 24.3% over 60 days. In this FY, focus will be on marketing ways to further reduce the aging actions through educating managers on the recruitment process, use of non-competitive sources to fill jobs, and reducing (when appropriate) the time an announcement is opened.

While much progress has been made – emphasis on achieving greater efficiencies and improvements in quality and timeliness through partnerships will continue. The CPOC is proud to be a partner with, and providing service to, the best!

COMMENTS

We welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Send comments to the CHRA-Europe Regional Director's Office at

CHREURDO@cpocur.army.mil